

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Lymm Angling Club held on Monday 16th October 2017
at Rudheath Social Club, Northwich commencing at 8pm**

Committee Members Present:

President – Jimmy Byrne (JB)

Chairman – Neil Boaz (NB)

Acting Secretary, Acting Membership Secretary and Treasurer – Pete Taylor (PT)

Head of Estates – Guy Humphries (GH)

Match Secretary – Mark Davies (MD)

Head Water Keeper – John Stubbs (JS)

Legal Advisor – Kelvin Parry (KP)

Fisheries Manager – Neil Boaz (NB)

Press and PR – Chris Finneran (CF)

Head Bailiff – Graham Poole (GP)

Assistant Head Bailiff – Royce Keenan (RK)

In addition to the 10 members of the committee there were an additional 30 club members present.

1 Chairman's Welcome

As Chairman NB welcomed everyone and formally opened the proceedings. NB said apologies for absence had been received from Andy Eaves and Paul Blake of the EA, from former President John Prescott, Len Dunn and Chris Hart. NB invited JB to address the meeting.

2 President's address

JB welcomed everyone and said it hardly seemed 12 months since the last AGM when he was elected President. Time really had flown. He thanked everyone who was in attendance for coming out on a very stormy night.

3 Minutes of the AGM 2016

GP asked for any comments on the minutes of the 2016 AGM. There were none.

Motion

That the minutes of the 2016 AGM be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting

Proposed: Paul Wild

Seconded: Colin Jenn

Carried unanimously

There were no matters arising from the minutes

4` Chairman's Report

NB reported that the beginning of the year had been a stinker. Phil Pennington (PP) the Secretary/Membership Secretary had personal and family health problems which had led to issues particularly with the handing of memberships for the 2016 season. Having apologised for this at the 2016 AGM there had been a repetition of events for the 2017 season with memberships not sent out on time.

On top of that there had been a pollution incident at Bradeley Hall Pool where carp died. This was followed by the loss of fish at Belmont Pool on the Belmont complex.

But despite it being widely said among the local angling fraternity that the club was 'going downhill' and when there is frequently a natural wastage of club members in the region of 10% of the overall membership, the club still had over 2000 members. In the opinion of NB the club had done well. In particular he thanked the committee for doubling up on responsibilities to cover for the vacancies created so NB was reasonably happy with the 2016-17 season.

Mick Janek asked from the floor what the issues with Belmont were. NB replied that matters had been fully explained on the club Forum. In a nutshell, the consultants could not really be sure but the water had suffered an algal bloom with fluctuating PH levels which fish do not like. This induced stress which in turn made them more vulnerable to infection. The fish also showed signs of predation by cormorants which would be further stress inducing. Between [] and [] fish died. They were all at least 16 years old and many showed signs of having been attacked by cormorants.

Fishing had been suspended on recommendation of the report and stocking density was also recommended for review. Subsequently fishing the pool resulted in [] different carp being caught. [] fish with bad mouths had also been removed. The pool had over time been overloaded with stock as a result of members moving fish from other ponds on the complex.

NB said a local club with a similar larger water had suffered the same problem and Mick Janek said he thought up to [] fish had died in that incident. NB said he expected one or two more deaths over the coming winter

5 Secretary's Report and Membership Secretary's Report

This was presented by PT as acting Secretary. The club Secretary and Vice-chairman Andy Watson (AW) had gone abroad but still held his positions on the committee which he would resume on his return to the UK early in 2018. In the meantime PT had picked up the Secretary role and correspondence from members now goes to him and Graeme 'Grazy' Roberts (GR). NB asked members for a vote of thanks to PT for stepping in during AW's absence.

PT reported that GR had taken on the membership secretary role when it was discovered that PP had got into a complete mess sending out memberships for 2017 at the beginning of the year. With PT and GR working to resolve the problems [] new memberships were sent out in February 2017. It seemed when membership cards had been sent out they carried insufficient postage so members had to go to the post office and pay the excess postage and a fine to get their cards.

New members now receive all their documentation in a smart wallet and GR can process everything very quickly. No complaints have been received since March 2017 though it is believed due to all the confusion some members may have two cards due to a corrupted database issue which had now been resolved.

There are [] paying members, [] complimentary members and [] CRT members making a total of [].

Nick Joynson from the floor mentioned that membership numbers on labels were fading after time. PT replied that this was a technical issue with the labels which was believed to have been sorted out but if it persists labels will be upgraded in the future. Membership numbers will be important to permit members' continued access logging in to the forum.

Paul Evans from the floor said in 2012 cards had been available at Lymmvale. PT replied that this had been stopped because it created complications in accounting with the money being used to offset the club expenses of the person selling the cards.

PT concluded by saying there will be a club open day at the end of October at Warrington Tackle where 2018 membership cards will be on sale

6 Treasurer's Report

PT reported that there had been an increase in income from 2015 to 2016 from [£] to [£] helped by fish sales of [£]. On the debit side, there were additional payments by way of water rental, a one-off payment on ending the arrangement with Manley Old Hall, a back payment to the Canals and Rivers Trust of [£] and an increase in rent for Belmont of [£]. In addition there was an outlay of [£ -] for machinery, a large consignment of aggregate stone and on-going maintenance. So 2016 started off with a surplus but ended with an overall [£] loss resulting from [£] of one off payments.

Looking forward 2017 should be a better year with no one off payments and increased income from membership subscriptions.

So far the purchased digger has been invaluable having been acquired for the cost of two days' hire of one plus operator when one was used at Aston. Quantities of aggregate have been used at Lake Lane, Lymmvale and Catchpenny.

7 Fisheries

NB said he would like to take members around the waters and invited members to ask questions about the waters. Not many nettings had been carried out. One was cancelled due to a lake being frozen on the appointed day and a netting was even performed on 14th February during Storm Doris. The Lake of Tranquility had been netted twice at the owner's request and the fish were held in predator proof stock ponds at [] and two new facilities had also been created. Fish would not be transferred to fishable waters until current predator problems had been resolved.

Ron Bowcock asked what weight of fish had been removed from Lake of Tranquility. NB replied [lb]. [lb] of carp had been netted but remained in the lake.

[lb] of Lake of Tranquility fish were transferred equally to Spring and New Pools at Lake Lane and perch went into Yew Tree on Belmont

A netting had been carried out in Burnley of a carp syndicate water where [] of [] fish were caught. A good consignment of [lb] bream had gone into Grimsditch but little had been seen of them.

Paul Evans asked about Wrinehill originally stocked with [] carp. NB confirmed no fish had been removed. NB reminded everyone that members are not to speak to owners about their waters. At Wrinehill members sought to undermine the club's position and set up a syndicate to take over a water and similar had happened at Woodside. Both Wrinehill and Woodside have the possibility of [] extensions to the current leases. The matter would be discussed at the first convenient committee meeting after the AGM and by 2018 the situation will be known

Kevin Bradley and CF asked if fish will be removed from Wrinehill and whether members will be told. NB said yes [] fish up to [lb], most likely in spring 2018 if they can be caught and are not suffering from any damage and members will be told. NB was asked if carp from Lymmvalle went into Wrinehill. The answer was no. The Wrinehill stock came from a United Utilities ornamental lake in Warrington. NB added the club introduced only one or two ghost carp. It is not known how the others were introduced they were either there already or have bred since. NB appreciated members wanted them removed but where would they go?

It was asked from the floor why not put aerators in Spring and New Pools. PT said because of the cost of operating them and NB added the need to attend to them.

It was also asked by the same member where could he go to catch silver fish. Everywhere seemed to be for the benefit of carp anglers. NB said Hampton Springs. No one went to Lake of Tranquility. Grindley Brook was also full of fish.

Ron Bowcock alleged the netting team was a secret society. Paul Wild replied from the floor that it was the same people doing all the work and there was nothing secret about it.

Mike Janek said he had heard the committee did not want Nunsmere and people are saying Wrinehill was having fish removed as a cheap source to stock Nunsmere. NB said the future of Nunsmere had not been discussed. NB added a pool had been netted in Ellesmere Port for the builders Persimmon and useful tench, crucians roach perch and rudd obtained but until predator problems are solved large match weights cannot be expected from club owned waters

8 Head of Estates

GH said he did not have much to report but he thanked Colin Jenn, Paul Evans and Andy Lee for their work. He said people were not coming forward to offer help with work. Work on Farm and Village pools had been completed and Whitley work had been started and Lake Lane had been completed. The team had been concentrating on pools. Wrinehill needs a lot of work doing to it. Members notify him if there issues with gates and trees down.

Weeds on Spring pool will be sprayed in spring to control them. Natural England ties the club's hands at Tabley. When paperwork is submitted the personnel responsible move jobs and NE require everything to be re-submitted. This has happened several times. The boat on Tabley Mere may now be used from 1st June. It was commented that the work done on Spring and Farm pools was tremendous. Comments were made about the damage on Village and Whitley by visiting caravan owners or possibly local residents.

9 Head Bailiff

GP reported he and RK had taken over bailiff responsibilities at the beginning of the year. The target was to improve bailiff activities and operations. There were about 50 bailiffs and waterkeepers. They canvassed members and used word of mouth seeking to appoint bailiffs with a local interest in waters. As a result 22 new bailiffs were appointed and there are now 54 of them including GP, RK and JS. Members and the general public call about incidents, unauthorised wild swimming, litter and conservation issues. GP works with the police wildlife officers and they use a mobile phone app to exchange information and pictures. There had been three bailiff meetings. Their philosophy was to be polite and helpful to members

The bailiffs try to advise anglers if they are not in compliance with club or water specific rules. There have been [] incidents of verbal advice being given. [] endorsements, [] second endorsements, [] suspensions and [] banned members. One EA prosecution resulted in the deportation of an EU citizen wanted by police abroad.

While most issues related to the infraction of water specific rules at the most extreme there was blatant disregard by two former members of the club's rules on no drinking or littering

10 Head Water Keeper

JS thanked all the bailiffs and water keepers for their work during the year. He had had problems with anglers on Founders with arguments over casting. A bailiff had had a fall out with another angler. JS believed he had resolved the issue. He was then called names by one of the anglers who was asked to leave the water. He went to Lymmvalle because JS encountered him there too when he went there ! The Founders water is a problem overall and the island is festooned with broken lines.

There are still no catch boxes on Village and Whitley pools. Estates are looking after Whitley and a catch box maybe introduced on Village. But this ignores the fact that members are still refusing to disclose what they catch. There have been [] culprits on Lymmvalle and [] have been suspended. Matters are similar on Catchpenny and Micklewrights. JS has personally seen anglers catch up to 7 or 8 fish yet complete blank returns.

JS wished to praise Darren and Lewis who having done a cracking job at Bradeley Hall have now kindly taken on Micklewrights after the club was let down by the original waterkeepers.

Runcorn canal sees poachers galore and no club members fish it. There is fantastic fishing to be had at Grindley Brook but no one fishes it either. At Woodside catch returns are posted by regulars.

Cormorants are a widespread problem and fish acquired from netting frequently show they have been attacked by cormorants

No one admits to catching at Nunsmere but they must be, otherwise they wouldn't keep going. Bate Mill was a great fishery but very under fished.

Thanks were owed to Phil O'Callaghan for all his work on the Severn. 4 catch boxes had now been installed there.

11 Juniors

CF said he resigned from his position with responsibility for juniors in 2016. There had only been 5 to 10 appearances by juniors including repeat appearance by the same juniors. The position in charge had been advertised and one enquiry had been received. Anyone interested should contact him. He said the club attended other events involving juniors but no junior events had been organised by the club itself. A carp event had been mooted but there was no response to feelers put out. Penketh Old Hall were the last club he knew of to offer junior coaching with maybe 10 events per year. Prince Albert held two or three events and they are the only club active with juniors. The club still has equipment for juniors and that is utilised for other things, donations received are channelled to appropriate events run by other clubs. Lymm also offers help and guidance to a Runcorn after school fishing club run by one of the teachers.

12 Press and PR

CP said the club successfully attended the Northern Angling show but we had too few volunteers to man the stand. Next year's show will be at the end of February 2018. Last year over 50 memberships were sold

CF wishes to use a blog to communicate the benefits of membership to anglers outside the club so it has compatibility with Facebook Twitter and Instagram.

There will be a local event on the Bridgewater canal in Runcorn held in conjunction with the Angling Trust as part of their Building Bridges programme to foster relations and educate eastern Europeans in the UK attitudes towards and principles of coarse angling.

CF hopes to introduce an email newsletter and there is already a bi-monthly best catch competition on social media won by attracting the most likes. A sponsor is still being sought but for the moment prizes are sourced from items donated to the club last month at the Northern Angling Show.

There was a discussion over the respective merits of the club's members' forum and public social media pages and the much wider audience reached by the latter. CF agreed, with a number of information channels, care needs to be taken to ensure communications were made through all means the club used and to make sure nothing slips through the cracks. Problems of communication were highlighted by the recent embarrassing need to cancel a match booking by a third party at Shakerley Mere.

13 Match Section

MD reported that there were 2 match groups. The summer Sunday series of matches attracting the same group of 8 to 14 anglers had just finished. They were fished on a mixture of club waters and commercials. Venues are dropped or chosen depending how they fish from week to week. Next summer there may be only 6 matches

In the winter series the best 6 results out of 9 count. This may be altered to the best 4 out of 6 matches the venues being both club and commercial waters. MD explained that the profile of modern match angling had changed. Anglers were no longer prepared to scratch for one or two bites, they wanted a water to offer frequent bites even in winter and they prefer silver fish to carp. The next match is the Fur n Feather on 29th October at Oasis and Poplars on Hampton Springs.

JS was also running the popular Veterans Series of matches also with consistent turn outs and a core of devotees held on club and commercial venues on Thursdays.

MD referred to the dilemma caused by external matches held on club waters requiring the partial or full closure of waters depriving members of fishing. The cancelled match at Shakerley was a prime example. The club had been approached to provide the venue for a match at Waverton on the Shropshire Union canal and the Yacht Fishing Club wished to hold a match at Beeston.

NB commented that the new owners of Woodside had allowed the realignment of a fence which would make the pool a more attractive match venue.

14 Nominations

NB stated that no nominations had been received from members. The positions of Secretary and Treasurer required annual re-election. PT had offered to carry on as Treasurer and the Committee nominated PT to continue in the role of Treasurer for a further period of 12 months

Motion

That Peter Taylor continue as Treasurer for a further period of office of 12 months

Proposed by the Committee

Carried unanimously

NB stated that the Secretary was the focal point of the club as all external correspondence goes through him. The committee nominated Graham Poole as Secretary

Motion

That Graham Poole be appointed Secretary for a period of 12 months

Proposed by the Committee

Carried unanimously

GP would presently continue as Head Bailiff to ensure continuity in that role

NB said that the other members of the committee had one year to run on the tenure of their respective periods of office.

NB also mentioned that although appointments for 2018 were now closed he believed the committee was not big enough to manage the affairs of such a big club although members may be co-opted by the committee during the year.

JS announced that he is standing down as Head Water Keeper

NB announced that under the constitution it was necessary to appoint accountants for the coming year.

The committee proposed that Jean Ellis of 5th Floor, Castle Chambers, Castle St, Liverpool, L32 9TL be appointed club accountant.

Motion

That Jean Ellis of 5th Floor, Castle Chambers, Castle St, Liverpool, L32 9TL be appointed club accountant

Carried unanimously

15 Membership Fees

NB stated that no increases were proposed to membership fees

16 Any Other Business

A member asked if GP was taking over the role of Secretary who would be appointed as Head Bailiff. NB stated that the appointment of a Head Bailiff going forward would be discussed and voted on by the Committee at the next meeting.

21 Date of Next Meeting

The AGM for 2018 will be held on Monday 15th October 2018.

22 **Close of Meeting**

NB declared the meeting closed at 1030pm